

July 18 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

the coast of Martha's Vineyard, MA, to locate the aircraft that carried Mr. Kennedy, his wife, and her sister, who were reported missing on July 17.

Statement on Crime Rate Statistics

July 18, 1999

Today's Justice Department statistics confirm that our strategy of more police on the street and fewer guns in the hands of criminals is working. Violent crime has now dropped by 27 percent since 1993, and overall crime has fallen to an unprecedented low. We should stick to this commonsense strategy.

Unfortunately, some in Congress are willing to play politics with our public safety and threaten all of our progress. They want to shut down

our successful community policing efforts and riddle our gun laws with dangerous new loopholes. To keep driving down the crime rates, Congress should support more police on the street and fewer guns, not more guns on the street and fewer police.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 16 but was embargoed for release until 4:30 p.m., July 18.

Remarks at a Dinner for Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

July 18, 1999

I want to, first of all, welcome you all and thank you for braving the rather lengthy receiving line. Prime Minister Barak has asked me to announce that you can relax, because our speeches will only be half as long as the receiving line. *[Laughter]*

It's a great pleasure and an honor for Hillary and I to welcome the Baraks to the White House. This is a good day. This is a good day for affirming the eternal friendship between Israel and the United States. It is also a hard day for those of us who are Americans, and we offer our prayers for John Kennedy, Carolyn Bessette, and Lauren Bessette and for their families. We are reminded again that life and its possibilities are fleeting, that we mortals are obliged to be humble and grateful for every day, and to make the most of every day, and that the obligation we bear for the search for peace in the Middle East should be assumed with that clear knowledge.

Mr. Prime Minister, 12 days ago you spoke to the *Knesset*, announcing your new government. Now, I read your speech with great interest, particularly your vow that you will, quote, "not sleep a wink" until peace is achieved.

Shortly after you gave that speech you came here; we went to Camp David; you kept me up until 1:45 in the morning. *[Laughter]* This is a man who keeps his commitments. *[Laughter]*

In that speech, you proclaimed that this moment is, quote, "a landmark and a turning point, a time of reconciliation, a time of unity, a time of peace." Many years of hard work have brought this day closer—some of it done on this very ground. Here Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat, with President Carter's assistance, made peace. Here Prime Minister Rabin, Chairman Arafat, and King Hussein committed to peace. Here last year, Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat agreed to build on that commitment.

Now the challenge is to make the promise of those days a reality every day from now on, to implement the Wye accords, to reach a permanent status agreement between Israel and the Palestinian people, to build a comprehensive peace for the region, including Syria and Lebanon. Mr. Prime Minister, you have made it very clear that Israel will keep its commitments. I want to make it equally clear that America